Mikhail Gorbachev: A Transformational Leader

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ABSTRACT

The peaceful end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev surprised theorists of international politics, who failed to predict that the five decades-long conflict would end abruptly and peacefully. The element of surprise was Gorbachev, an uncharacteristic Soviet leader with Western thinking. His new thinking liberalized the Soviet system, brought historic changes to Eastern Europe, ended the Cold War, and dissolved the Soviet Union. To explain this chain of events, realists pointed to Gorbachev's foreign policy ideas causing the economic decline of the Soviet Union. Constructivists assumed that Gorbachev's plan to restructure the Soviet economic and political system and create a peaceful international order was the leading cause, while liberals blamed the liberalization of the domestic Soviet system and democratic peace. The peaceful end of the Cold War was heavily influenced by human behavior, a complex variable to predict. Gorbachev's upbringing in the province and his Moscow education created an unusual Soviet operational code: a leader interested in cooperation and peacemaking, development rather than destruction, and willing to pursue an interdependent foreign policy. This paper examines Gorbachev's psychological traits to explain his role in the peaceful end of the Cold War.

Keywords: Gorbachev, Cold War, Soviet Union, operational code, political psychology

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RESUMEN

El final pacífico de la Guerra Fría y la disolución de la Unión Soviética bajo el liderazgo de Mikhail Gorbachev sorprendieron a los teóricos de la política internacional, quienes no pudieron predecir que el conflicto de cinco décadas terminaría abrupta y pacíficamente. El elemento sorpresa fue Gorbachov, un líder soviético atípico con pensamiento occidental. Su nuevo pensamiento liberalizó el sistema soviético,

trajo cambios históricos a Europa del Este, puso fin a la Guerra Fría y disolvió la Unión Soviética. Para explicar esta cadena de eventos, los realistas señalaron que las ideas de política exterior de Gorbachov causaron el declive económico de la Unión Soviética. Los constructivistas asumieron que el plan de Gorbachov para reestructurar el sistema económico y político soviético y crear un orden internacional pacífico era la causa principal, mientras que los liberales culparon a la liberalización del sistema soviético interno y a la paz democrática. El final pacífico de la Guerra Fría estuvo fuertemente influenciado por el comportamiento humano, una variable compleja de predecir. La crianza de Gorbachov en la provincia y su educación en Moscú crearon un código operativo soviético inusual: un líder interesado en la cooperación y el establecimiento de la paz, el desarrollo en lugar de la destrucción, y dispuesto a seguir una política exterior interdependiente. Este artículo examina los rasgos psicológicos de Gorbachov para explicar su papel en el final pacífico de la Guerra Fría.

Palabras clave: Gorbachov, Guerra Fría, Unión Soviética, código operativo, psicología política

米哈伊尔·戈尔巴乔夫：变革型领导者

摘要

冷战的和平结束和苏联在米哈伊尔·戈尔巴乔夫领导下的解体令国际政治理论家感到震惊，他们没有料到长达五十年的冲突会突然和平结束。震惊的要素在于戈尔巴乔夫，一位不寻常的、具有西方思想的苏联领导人。他的新思想解放了苏联体制，给东欧带来了历史性的变化，结束了冷战，解散了苏联。为了解释这一系列事件，现实主义者指向戈尔巴乔夫的外交政策理念，后者导致了苏联的经济衰退。建构主义者认为，戈尔巴乔夫在重组苏联经济体系和政治体系并建立和平国际秩序方面的计划是主要原因，而自由主义者则指责苏联国内制度的自由化和民主和平。冷战的和平结束在很大程度上受到人类行为这一难以预测的复杂变量的影响。戈尔巴乔夫在省内的成长经历和他在莫斯科接受的教育创造了一个不同寻常的苏联行动准则：一位对合作、和平、发展（而不是破坏）感兴趣并愿意奉行相互依存的外交政策的领导人。本文分析了戈尔巴乔夫的心理特征，以解释他在冷战和平结束中的作用。

关键词：戈尔巴乔夫，冷战，苏联，行动准则，政治心理学

I. Introduction

Between 1989 and 1991, the world witnessed some of its most significant historical moments. After five decades of nuclear proliferation and ongoing tensions between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, the Cold War came to an unexpected and abrupt peaceful end, followed by the dissolution of the Soviet Union (USSR) under the rule of the Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev, the key actor in the peaceful conclusion of this conflict. A transformational leader of the likes never seen before in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev's new way of thinking liberalized his country, brought historic changes to Eastern Europe, and ended the Cold War. That Gorbachev's ideas surprised the Western world and the Soviet Union is simply an understatement. The main theories of international politics failed to foresee the Cold War's peaceful end and the collapse of the USSR. The reasons this conflict—spanning almost five decades—ended peacefully and in less than two years became a debate among the theorists. From a realist perspective, Gorbachev's foreign policy was at the root of the economic decline of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, constructivists claimed that restructuring the economic and political Soviet system to create a peaceful international order, Gorbachev's "new thinking," or "Perestroika," was the cause that ended the Cold War (Snyder, 2005, 57). Liberals believed the Cold War unexpectedly ended because of Gorbachev's democratic peace proposal and his lib-

eralization of the domestic Soviet system (Lebow, Risse-Kappen, 2001, 66). In reality, the end of the Cold War was heavily influenced by human behavior. Human behavior is difficult to predict. This theory application paper discusses Gorbachev's role in ending the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR. The paper focuses on Gorbachev's personality features that influenced his decision-making process and led to these significant events. The analysis is conducted from the perspective of realist, liberal, and constructivist theories. Image theory is also discussed.

II. Method

The method used in this theory application paper is to compare and contrast the research and theoretical views on the end of the Cold War to evaluate the consequential role of Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership. Personality traits, including motivation, belief, style, self-confidence, and cognition, are utilized to assess Gorbachev's personality at a distance to understand potential policy implications at the global level.

III. Analysis

1. Mikhail Gorbachev

Mikhail Gorbachev was born to a low-income family of peasants, in the small village of Privolnoe, close to the city of Stavropol in the southwest of the Soviet Union. As a child, he often had to help the family by working in the fields and starved for days on end. His childhood also coincides with some of

the most challenging years of the USSR, marked by famine, collectivization, the aggressive politics of Joseph Stalin culminating with the Great Purge, and World War II. Gorbachev witnessed firsthand the injustice and impact of land collectivization, a fundamental cause of the 1932-1933 famine (Taubman, 2018, 7). His family's farm was collectivized, and several family members died of starvation. Stalin's Great Purge, the exclusion from the Communist Party of those unfaithful to the Stalinist doctrine, affected Gorbachev directly when his paternal grandfather was arrested in 1934 (Taubman, 2018, 18). World War II followed, and the German occupation of Privolnoe in 1941. His father had to join the Red Army on the frontlines of World War II, leaving the ten-year-old Mikhail in charge of his family and work on the farm, returning severely wounded in 1944 (Taubman, 2018, 26).

This traumatic period had a significant impact on Gorbachev's development later in life, his leadership style, and his desire to reform the domestic Soviet system to help everyday citizens. The direct effects of collectivization and famine on his family convinced Gorbachev that Stalin's agricultural collectivization was an injustice. As the Stavropol Communist Party secretary, Gorbachev reorganized the collective farms, improving the life of field workers by giving them more freedom to plan their work and increasing the size of individual land lots. Later, as the Secretary of the Central Committee, Gorbachev's agrarian reform offered collective farms more freedom to sell part of their production for a profit rather than surrendering the entire production to the Soviet state (Taubman, 2018, 53). Gorbachev could never overcome the trauma of his direct experience with World War II. Consequently, as the leader of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev showed unprecedented reluctance to use any military force. He oversaw the USSR withdrawal from Afghanistan and masterminded the withdrawal from the military and political intervention in Eastern Europe. As the leader of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev's changes to the Soviet system were so drastic and unexpected that he was later assessed as the first Soviet leader that acted as an "authentic Western politician" (Pop, 2011, 12). Political psychologists characterized Gorbachev as a "transformational leader" (Janis, 1989, 2).

Looking back on his early life, it is evident that Gorbachev's main psychological traits that played a significant role in his decision-making process originated in his life experiences. His early life in the province, combined with his later education in Moscow, led to a unique understanding of how central control affected the Soviet population (Janis, 1989, 1) and his desire to make the system better for everyone. The unique experience and traits of the Soviet leader were the main element of surprise and an important reason the theories in international politics failed to predict the peaceful end of the Cold War. As a post-world war leader, Gorbachev was more liberal in thinking and more willing to make significant decisions and changes to the system.

2. Realism, Liberalism, and Constructivism

The reason theories of international relations failed to predict the Cold War would end peacefully remains debatable. To make predictions, theorists look at the past and analyze behavior patterns. To evaluate the validity of any of these theories, it is essential to look at their success in predicting significant moments in history (Gaddis, 1992, 10). An integral theory approach is behavioralism, based on direct observation, employing the scientific method to collect data. However, this method is relatively slow, and therefore behavioralists were not done collecting the necessary data by the time the Cold War ended. Their conclusions drawn from available data were simply tentative (Gaddis, 1992, 21). This may be one important reason why theories of international politics failed to predict how the Cold War would end. Gaddis (1992) blamed social sciences for trying to gain legitimacy as real science by using methods such as behavioralism based on scientific research methodologies. These failed to predict human behavior because human behavior is complex, and a model to simulate it would be challenging and impossible (Gaddis, 1992, 55). Kratochwil (1993) agrees that attempting to apply the scientific method to a theory of international relations is the wrong approach. The neo-realist and realist attempt to gain credibility by using the scientific method to obtain precise results in their assessment has failed and led to the inability to discover significant insights into the political situation of the Cold War (Kratochwil, 1993, 64).

Because the peaceful end of the Cold War surprised theorists of international relations, a custom-designed theory of Soviet foreign policy and its role in the domestic policy of the USSR may be needed to explain and understand the causes of this significant historical event of the twentieth century (Snyder, 2005, 55). Snyder (2005) used the unique method of connecting the assessments of the different theories, specifically the constructivist, realist, and neo-realist perspectives on what was at the root of ending the Cold War abruptly.

While constructivists believed that the end of the Cold war was attributed to ideas—in this case, Gorbachev's "new thinking"—realists claimed the end of the Cold War and the decline of the Soviet Union were caused instead by material factors—the economic fall of the USSR, a situation that influenced Gorbachev's foreign policy. This foreign policy was designed to save a declining Soviet Union (Snyder, 2005, 55). The element of surprise was Gorbachev himself, a counterrevolutionary leader who proposed an unexpected foreign policy that reformed the Soviet economic and political system. It is fair to say that the domestic goals of the Soviet leader are at the root of his foreign policy, which in turn put an end to the Cold War (Snyder, 2005, 55). Realists could not explain why Gorbachev's revolution went as far as it did to lead to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. In contrast, constructivists did not recognize

that the reason behind the new foreign policy was not idealistic for practical purposes. Gorbachev's transformative foreign policy was designed to force domestic change in the Soviet system (Snyder, 2005, 56).

However, the realist and constructivist failures to assess the end of the Cold War are understandable. These are theories of international politics, and while the primary cause may have been a transformative foreign policy, the theories are not equipped to analyze domestic causes. Therefore, to connect the divide between realism and constructivism, a specific approach is necessary to explain how Gorbachev's foreign policy relates to the Soviet state and its domestic troubles (Snyder, 2005, 56).

A. Realism and Neo-Realism

When the Soviet Union collapsed, realists predicted a shift in global power from bipolarity to multipolarity, which meant more conflict and less stability. Between 1989 and 1991, realists expressed concern for the collapse of the bipolar world. Realism is based on the idea that global governance is anarchic. Therefore, stability on the global stage requires bipolarity, which explains the long peace after the Second World War through the existence of bipolarity in the international system: two superpowers balancing each other (Lebow, 1994, 252). To preserve superpower status, states tend to maintain their sphere of control and influence. This explains the failure of realism to predict the peaceful end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the USSR. Gorbachev's

decision to give up control of the Eastern European block and withdraw the Soviet military from Afghanistan surprised realist theorists. The idea that a superpower would abandon its sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and its show of military power in Afghanistan cannot be reconciled with realism (Lebow, 1994, 262). Gorbachev's foreign policy was inconsistent with realist predictions, going as far as to accommodate its adversary, the United States.

Some realists claimed that Gorbachev's foreign policy was not, in fact, uncommon, but rather in accord with the realist idea that maintaining power is the priority. Gorbachev's domestic reform was meant to increase the superpower status of the USSR, and his foreign policy was designed to simply support his domestic agenda (Lebow, 1994, 263). However, this assumption is inconsistent with the fundamental realist idea that superpowers would not renounce their sphere of influence. How would a foreign policy supporting a domestic agenda lead to a decline of a superpower? (Lebow, 1994, 263). While Gorbachev spoke extensively about significant economic reform, he delayed any measures to do anything about the economy, taking very few steps in this direction. At the same time, his foreign policy plans were implemented fast and steady. To claim his foreign policy was designed to support the domestic policy is not a persuasive explanation (Lebow, 1994, 266).

The approach of neo-realism to the end of the Cold War was described as "embarrassed" because the expec-

tations and predictions of this theory were not factoring in peace, but hegemonic war (Kratochwil, 1993, 63). The fact that the domestic reform generated changes at the international level to the Soviet system was also a surprise. Neo-realism is a theory based on power and unable to comprehend power renunciation. The attempt of neo-realism and realism to gain credibility by using the scientific method to get precise results in their assessment has failed and led to the inability to discover significant insights into a political situation that realism could offer (Kratochwil, 1993, 64).

Approaching international politics from a scientific perspective led to a lack of significant questions and the abandonment of traditional methods of assessing human behavior. Since neo-realism has failed to predict the changes of Perestroika, an alternative method of analysis is needed in international politics. Neo-realism predictions failed because Gorbachev's actions, decision-making style, and human behavior cannot be quantified. Instead, by focusing on leaders' political action and behavior, this new framework of analysis would be able to better predict future changes on the global stage (Kratochwil, 1993, 80). Koslowski (1994) agrees with the assessment that Gorbachev's actions undermined neo-realist predictions of how the Cold War would end. Gorbachev was able to reverse the Bolshevik conquest of domestic Soviet politics and the Soviet dominance in Eastern Europe by simply ending the Brezhnev Doctrine (Koslowski, 1994, 216). This surprised neo-realism because this

theory expected bipolarity to last, and Gorbachev's actions led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and hence the end of bipolarity in world power. Besides this, the changes that led to the end of the Cold War did not match any of the neo-realist predictions, as these changes did not occur as a consequence of a hegemonic war, nor because a new superpower would arise or gaps in military capabilities (Koslowski, 1994, 217). On the contrary. Gorbachev's action to discard the Brezhnev Doctrine led to the overthrow of the communist regimes in the Eastern European countries and the end of the Warsaw Pact. Neo-realists' failure is rooted in their disregard for the national politics of the Soviet Union and claim that the peaceful end of the Cold War was a result of Gorbachev's desire to reform the domestic Soviet system. Unlike his predecessors, Gorbachev understood that political and economic reform within the USSR could only occur in a global environment of peace. For this purpose, maintaining dominance in Eastern Europe through the use of force and participating in an ongoing Cold War with the West was counterproductive (Koslowski, 1994, 218).

Another failure of neo-realism was its prediction that the opponent, the United States, would take advantage of its adversary's weaknesses, a Soviet economy and political system in decline. It would implement an aggressive foreign policy that would further weaken the USSR. However, the United States chose cooperation, invited the USSR to join international organizations, and went even further to offer financial aid

to help with their economic reform. Neo-realism's explanation for this behavior was that a superpower would do anything to avoid a power vacuum on the global stage, which is the reason behind the U.S.'s help. However, this argument is inaccurate because it contradicts the neo-realist idea of power maximization (Koslowski, 1994, 220). Furthermore, the United States continued multilateral cooperation even after the USSR collapsed.

B. Liberalism

While realism asserts that the international system is anarchic and prone to conflict, liberalism is based on cooperation rather than conflict, freedom, and democratic peace, with a psychological root in the retreat of fear (Hymans, 2010, 464). An ongoing cold war with the West was a significant obstacle to Gorbachev's idea to liberalize and decentralize the Soviet system. Long-term peace and the global integration of the Soviet Union was much more critical to achieving a stable, centralized economy. Gorbachev's decision to end any military operations in Afghanistan and withdraw from a military and political intervention in Eastern Europe were actions rooted in liberal principles (Snyder, 2005, 59). As a post-world war leader, Gorbachev was more liberal in thinking than the Soviet leaders that came before him, and he was not afraid of the consequences of significant decisions.

C. Constructivism

Constructivism considers the international system an artificial collection of institutions—a collection that includes states and other actors on the global stage. Changes to this system usually occur within established and accepted conventions within this artifice. However, if these conventions are altered, more fundamental system changes can occur (Lebow, 2001, 99). This means that one leader can, in theory, change the entire system. Constructivists claimed that Gorbachev's reform of the Soviet economic and political system with the scope to create a peaceful international order, the "new thinking," "Perestroika," was the leading cause of the peaceful end of the Cold War. Ideas and agency are at the root of this unexpected event in history (Snyder, 2005, 57). However, constructivism could not recognize that Gorbachev's "new thinking" was to use foreign policy to make systemic changes within the Soviet Union (Snyder, 2005, 56). Constructivism explains Gorbachev's abandonment of the Eastern European block not as a decision to give up control but rather to retain it through the domestic reform of the communist system, hoping that the Perestroika model would prevail and inspire other communist leaders to follow.

While psychological realism claims that fear is the foundation of a conflict in the international system, psychological constructivism sees spirit and honor at the root of an armed conflict that aims to establish a hierarchy (Hymans, 2010, 463). However, it is understandable why this honor-based theory may have failed to predict the peaceful end of the Cold War. The main limitation of an honor-driven system

is that, in a world where honor plays a significant role, order in the global system is often established through armed conflict to create a hierarchy on the international stage and not for protection (Hymans, 2010, 463). Gorbachev's choice to renounce the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe and pursue military withdrawal from Afghanistan did not match the idea that a conflict is at the root of any effort to establish hierarchy on the global stage. The constructivist assessment that at the root of ending the Cold War was Gorbachev's new thinking was accurate. However, it does contradict its idea of the spirit and honor-based world.

3. Image Theory

Image theory explains well why the peaceful end of the Cold War was so unexpected. Belief systems affect perception and decision-making in international politics. Leaders develop an image of their adversaries based on a belief system. The decision-making process in international politics is affected by this image that often is not a real, objective one but rather an image based on stereotypes (Holsti, 1962, 3). National stereotypes are concerning in international politics, as they can influence conflict and the perception of an actor as being "bad" or the "enemy." In a global conflict, decision-making actors tend to act according to the image of the adversary they have established based on their perception. Therefore, conflicts often occur between distorted images of states and not reality (Holsti, 1962, 3). Applying these ideas to the Cold

War, the West developed a belief system based on a stereotypical image of the Soviet leader embodied by Stalin, Kruschev, and Brezhnev. These were leaders committed to the strength of the socialist system both within the Soviet Union and at the foreign policy level through actions such as military interventions in countries members of the Warsaw Pact to ensure the survival and thriving of the socialist governments. Gorbachev's leadership did not fit the pattern, the belief system, or the stereotypical image of the Soviet leader. The leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev came as a pleasant surprise to the West. Gorbachev's decision-making in reorienting the Soviet foreign policy towards reconciling with the West defied the accepted operational code of the Soviet leader. The unique traits of Gorbachev's personality were the element of surprise, as Gorbachev was a transformational leader (Janis, 1989, 2) rather than the classic Soviet leader predicted by image theorists.

Foreign policy decisions are based on the world's image and not the real world, which is quite the issue when such foreign policy decisions are based on a false image. Making decisions based on a manufactured image of the external world has been known as the "operational code" (George, 1969, 191). It is essential to understand the belief systems that lead to a specific operational code to analyze decision-making in international politics. This will help better understand leadership style (George, 1969, 221). Interestingly, despite the failure of international relations theories to predict the peaceful end of the Cold War, theorists conclud-

ed that it is essential to analyze leaders' subjective belief systems and behavior to better predict future decisions in foreign policy (Schafer & Walker, 2006, 3). Analysis of the operational code became an essential method in political psychology and international relations. The theory of the operational code was a product of the early Cold War and had as its scope the study of political leaders to predict the intentions and actions of Soviet officials (Gaddis, 1992, 9).

4. Gorbachev's Operational Code: A Behavior Analysis

Personality traits such as motivation, belief, style, self-confidence, and cognition can be utilized to assess a political leader's personality at a distance to understand potential policy implications at the global level. For this purpose, it is helpful to have an operational code focused on Gorbachev's view of self and the relations of the self with the world and its politics (Winter, 1991, 224). Gorbachev's interviews and speeches were compared with previous Soviet leaders, including Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and American presidents George Bush and Richard Nixon. The analysis was based on interpersonal style, cognition, belief, and power motivation and pointed to an unexpected similarity between Gorbachev and Bush and Nixon and dissimilarity between Gorbachev and Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev. This comparison suggests potential issues or problems a leader might encounter (Winter, 1991, 230).

Advances in neuroscience reveal new details about how the brain functions and can help assess how emotion affects political decisions and can be used to predict future choices (McDermott, 2004, 691). Emotion does matter in determining personality, and therefore, it cannot be ignored. It is essential in quick decision-making; analyzing it can reveal necessary information about a leader and the situation in which a specific decision was made (McDermott, 2004, 702). Emotions and emotional relationships and the disregard for these can be helpful in the assessments of international relations theories. The disregard for emotion can cause the failure of peacebuilding following wars as, most of the time, these attempts can trigger "emotional fire" (Crawford, 2000, 116). This ignorance is based on the assumption that state actors are rational, even if many of these theories are based on emotion, for example, realism on fear (Crawford, 2000, 116). Emotions such as fear, anger, or empathy deserve some attention and study in international politics.

Personality psychologists used emotion, achievement, affiliation, and power interest to measure Gorbachev's motive. Beliefs such as nationalism and trust are used to measure authoritarian personality tendencies. Self-confidence is used to assess if a leader would be active or reactive (Winter, 1991, 222). Besides these personality traits, Gorbachev's operational code could denote if he perceived the political environment as hostile or friendly, what his historical legacy would be, how he could achieve his political goals, and what means he should use to achieve these aspirations (Winter, 1991, 223). The

analysis reveals a motive profile characterized by high achievement, high affiliation, average power interest, and a rationally cooperative personality. The high affiliation score denotes a leader that would pursue agreements on arms limitations. Gorbachev scored lower in power motivation than other Soviet leaders. However, compared to George Bush and Richard Nixon, the power motivation result was similar and average. Lower to average power motivation means the leader will be less likely to use force and aggression to accomplish his goals (Winter, 1991, 231).

The beliefs and styles analysis showed a similarity between Bush and Gorbachev again, as both scored high on nationalism and distrust of others (Winter, 1991, 231). While usually high nationalism means very simplistic thinking, in Gorbachev's case, a heightened nationalism and distrust score and an increased complexity score suggest a refined ability to differentiate and understand different points of view, principles, and policies and use the discrepancies to develop complex generalizations. High complexity can mitigate heightened nationalism and distrust through intellectualization. Gorbachev's high confidence score means an optimistic personality (Winter, 1991, 231). As far as traits, Gorbachev showed a dynamic interpersonal style, was very expressive but in control of emotions, displayed low anxiety, was sensitive to criticism but knew how to control the challenge, and was overall an excellent actor-politician (Winter, 1991, 235). As far as decision-making is concerned, Gorbachev's personality showed a relatively moderate than impulsive tendency, ability to utilize the ideas and solutions of others to solve a problem, and a stable extrovert (Winter, 1991, 235).

Adding up these findings, Gorbachev's operational code is determined by his characterization as a friendly, optimistic leader with broad goals and vision, positive reactions, focused on words rather than actions, and virtue rather than threats. This mix of personality traits makes a leader capable of exerting great control of foreign policy and foreign policy outcomes (Winter, 1991, 234). Gorbachev's motivation was based on achievement and affiliation, not power and exploitation, which explains his tendency to seek the help and ideas of others in achieving his goal of solving national problems and bettering the Soviet system. This operational code describes a leader prone to cooperation, peacemaking, and interest in development rather than destruction, with a tendency to pursue an interdependent foreign policy.

As a leader who made a significant difference in history because of his unique personality capable of changing the international system and global order, Gorbachev can be compared to Napoleon and Churchill, primarily through his sound decision-making under stress while resisting social pressure, together with his lack of strict adherence to the Bolshevik operational code was critical to his success (Janis, 1989, 3). His renowned popularity abroad compares to that of the Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, who was exten-

sively admired outside of Egypt, but ultimately fell prey to the divisiveness of his own country, which eventually led to Sadat's inability to achieve his visions for Egypt (Post, 1989, 2).

Public statements Gorbachev made between 1985 and 1991 were used to analyze his behavior patterns and how the external environment affected these patterns and reveal the relationship between the crises he faced, the policies he proposed to solve these crises, and his decision-making style (Wallace et al., 1996, 454). Gorbachev exhibited a different behavior pattern from his first years in power than the previous Soviet leaders. Still, this behavior pattern developed over time to grow in complexity when dealing with foreign policy issues while remaining simplistic when dealing with domestic problems. This could be why Gorbachev was a successful leader on the global stage but was seen as a failure domestically by the Soviets (Wallace et al., 1996, 454).

External environmental factors play an essential role in shaping a leader's behavior and complexity. For example, right at the beginning of his tenure in power, in 1985, Gorbachev faced severe opposition from conservative Soviet leadership when he proposed simultaneously a critical change in foreign policy, the reduction of strategic warheads by half, and radical economic reform in domestic policy. As a reaction to this opposition, Gorbachev removed some of the Soviet leaders holding positions in the council of ministers and the military command for too long

(Wallace et al., 1996, 458). This measure was sufficient to signal to the West that Gorbachev was a different kind of Soviet leader. Gaining a reputation as a transformational leader, Gorbachev continued to score successes on the international stage. However, that cannot be said of the domestic stage. While successfully establishing and strengthening his power within the communist party, an economy in free fall, budget deficits and nationalist movements within the Soviet Union fighting for the independence of Soviet states were not good news for Gorbachev (Wallace et al., 1996, 459). And yet his desire for domestic change remained unwavering.

Wallace's study found significant differences in domestic and foreign policy behavioral complexities. Interestingly, Gorbachev's foreign policy strategies were complex and versatile in dealing with the changes on the global stage at that time. In contrast, his domestic policies remained simplistic and failed to implement the domestic reform of his desire and even help him stay in power (Wallace et al., 1996, 468). While Gorbachev was a unique Soviet leader in foreign policy, he was not different domestically from other Soviet leaders before him, unable to keep the Soviet economic decline under control.

5. Gorbachev's Decision-Making Analysis

To adequately explain the significant changes in the international systems that led to the end of the Cold War, it is crucial to give credit to the world leaders involved in the event, particularly

Gorbachev, and how their decisions were influenced by the events of the day. An excellent example of this is the impact of the Prague Spring, an event that took place in 1968, long before Gorbachev came into power, on the future decisions of this Soviet leader (Suri, 2002, 77). The Prague Spring was the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet army, another military action that affected young Gorbachev. As already discussed, Gorbachev's life was significantly influenced by World War II, and because of his personal experience with war, he became a strong opponent of any form of violence. He writes in his memoirs about the influence of the Prague Spring on his future decisions as a leader and how events like this made him into a reformist thinker (Suri, 2002, 77). His experience with war made him realize that to accomplish his domestic economic reforms, he would need to be able to operate in the context of a peaceful international environment. An ongoing Cold War would have meant economic stagnation at best and complete economic decline at worst, precisely the domestic situation Gorbachev wanted to change (Suri, 2002, 78). Successful cooperation between the East and the West was essential for the USSR to allocate all its resources to solving domestic issues rather than maintaining the needs for an ongoing Cold War (Suri, 2002, 78).

Gorbachev's Perestroika was also rooted in a new philosophical approach for a Soviet leader. While previous Kremlin leaders focused on a class approach, Gorbachev favored "humanistic universalism" (Suri, 2002, 79). As

an avid reader and scholar of politics and philosophy, this is not surprising. Emphasizing common ground between the East and the West regarding values rather than differences, Gorbachev built his foreign policy on this humanistic universalism approach, proposing that common ground can overcome the differences at the root of the Cold War (Suri, 2002, 79). While this philosophical approach was welcomed on the global stage, within the USSR, some communist party leaders did not favor a humanistic direction for the Soviet system but rather the need for a radical change. But as Secretary of the Central Committee, Gorbachev chose to surround himself with "new thinkers" willing to favor cooperation rather than conflict (Suri, 2002, 80). The domestic "new thinking" was crucial for developing the foreign "new thinking," and without it, an improvement of the relationship between the East and the West was inconceivable. Domestic changes and development were vital to ending the tensions at the global level and replacing them with cooperation and long-term peace (Suri, 2002, 80). Another critical factor in ending the Cold War was Gorbachev's decision to give up control of the Eastern European block. It remains unknown how Gorbachev made this decision and how he could convince his fellow communist party leaders to agree and renounce a large sphere of influence for the USSR (Suri, 2002, 82). However, withdrawal from political control of the Eastern Europe countries, just like the military withdrawal from Afghanistan, are behavior patterns exhibited by Gorbachev

because of his experience with war, invasions, and foreign control. How could he ask for international cooperation while exerting control over several independent nations?

Gorbachev's attempt to reform the socialist system was the second such attempt, following that of Nikita Khrushchev, with the significant difference that Gorbachev's action was a fatal hit to the Soviet empire in particular and the socialist system in general and precipitated the end of the Cold War (Pop, 2011, 12). The problem with Gorbachev's attempt to reform the Soviet system was that it took place when the system was already in free fall, and a fundamental reform at such a moment was dangerous. In the words of Alexis de Tocqueville, "the most perilous moment for a bad government is one when it seeks to mend its ways" (Pop, 2011, 12). Consequently, the attempt to fundamentally reform the system led to its disintegration and the collapse of the USSR. Gorbachev's critics and admirers alike attributed this to the so-called "Gorbachev factor," a set of personal traits including optimism, naivete, self-confidence, and the desire to act ad hoc when needed, while also postponing difficult decisions, his Western thinking, but also the aversion towards the use of force (Pop, 2011, 13).

For example, Gorbachev's tendencies to delay difficult decisions were at the root of his failure to implement economic reform in time, while his naivete was at the heart of his belief that Eastern Europe could maintain socialism as a form of government. Conse-

quently, he was not worried when the regimes of the Eastern European block began to disintegrate. However, his Western thinking was one of his most admired traits on the global stage, and it led to his assessment as the first Soviet leader that acted as an "authentic Western politician" (Pop, 2011, 12). The criticism within the Soviet Union and the admiration abroad determined Gorbachev to turn more and more toward the West.

To evaluate the role the "Gorbachev factor" played in ending the Cold War and the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, including the dissolution of the USSR, it is vital to question why these processes did not occur before 1989 (Pop, 2011, 13). Before the mid-80s, the idea of withdrawing politically from the Eastern European block was not vehiculated at all in the Soviet Union. On the contrary, there was a precise determination to maintain this sphere of influence in the area even if force was needed. A trend to abandon socialism existed in the Eastern European countries way before 1989. Still, the USSR continued to firmly maintain its hegemony in the area under the so-called "Brezhnev Doctrine," the idea that the USSR had the right and obligation to intervene in any Eastern European country to preserve the socialist system (Pop, 2011, 14). Gorbachev decided to renounce the Brezhnev Doctrine, opening the door to geopolitical and ideological change in Eastern Europe. Gorbachev improved relations with the West, making the abandonment of the Stalin–Churchill "Percentage Agree-

ment" of 1944 possible. Before Gorbachev, this agreement kept the West from interference in Eastern European affairs, a significant obstacle in eliminating the socialist system and implementing capitalism and democracy in these countries (Pop, 2011, 14). With Gorbachev in power, in the second half of the 1980s, a new relationship developed between the East and the West, allowing for European integration of the Eastern European countries. Under Gorbachev's leadership, the final meeting of the Warsaw Treaty Organization in December 1989 agreed that the 1968 military intervention in the Prague Spring was illegal (Pop, 2011, 15). Reform in Eastern Europe was only possible once the policy of non-intervention was agreed upon by all members of the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

Gorbachev's Perestroika aimed to restructure and revitalize the Soviet Union, render its economy competitive on the global stage, and improve the image of socialism in the world (Patman, 1999, 578). Gorbachev's leadership was undoubtedly at the root of this new way of thinking, together with the ongoing decline of the Marxist-Leninist political system and an adversary (the U.S.) with an ongoing program of military renewal that forced Soviet leadership to choose between an ongoing cold war with a far superior military adversary, or cooperation (Patman, 1999, 579). As a post-Stalin era Soviet leader, Gorbachev was able to introduce a new foreign policy and arms control while minimizing the power of the domestic Stalinist leaders, reforming Stalinist institutions, and implementing an organic involvement of

the Soviet Union in the global economy (Snyder, 1987, 95).

IV. Conclusion

Mikhail Gorbachev was a key actor in the peaceful conclusion of the Cold War. A one-of-a-kind transformational leader, Gorbachev's new way of thinking liberalized the Soviet Union, brought historic changes to Eastern Europe, and ended the Cold War. But Gorbachev's ideas surprised both the Western world and the Soviet Union alike, leading to the main theories of international politics failing to foresee the Cold War's peaceful end and the collapse of the USSR. Realists claimed Gorbachev's foreign policy was at the root of the economic decline of the Soviet Union. Liberals believed the Cold War unexpectedly ended because of Gorbachev's democratic peace proposal and his liberalization of the domestic Soviet system. Constructivists suggested that restructuring the economic and political Soviet system to create a peaceful international order, Gorbachev's "new thinking," or "Perestroika," was the cause that ended the Cold War.

Ultimately, the peaceful end of the Cold War was heavily influenced by human behavior. This theory application paper analyzed Gorbachev's role in ending the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR by looking at Gorbachev's personality features that influenced his decision-making process and led to these significant events. The analysis was conducted from the perspective of realist, liberal, constructivist, and image

theories. Personality traits, including motivation, belief, style, self-confidence, and cognition, were utilized to assess Gorbachev's personality at a distance to understand potential policy implications at the global level. Gorbachev's operational code, defined by his characterization as a friendly, optimistic leader with broad goals and vision, positive reactions, focused on words rather than actions, and virtue rather than threats, revealed a leader capable of exerting great control of foreign policy and foreign policy outcomes. This operational code revealed a leader prone to cooperation, peacemaking, and interest in development rather than destruction, with a tendency to pursue an interdependent foreign policy. This was difficult to predict for any international relations theories. Gorbachev and his decision-making in reorienting the Soviet foreign policy toward reconciling with the West to change the domestic landscape of the Soviet Union were the elements of surprise.

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